

Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)

29 Shorncliffe Road, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 2NB

Inspection dates	23/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for boarders	Outstanding	1
Quality of boarding provision and care	Good	2
Boarders' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of boarding	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The boarding provision is good because

- The boarding provision is an integral feature of the school. It has a positive impact on the quality of boarders' lives and their opportunities for the future. The boarding provision clearly enhances boarders' development, educationally, socially and culturally. In particular, the cultural diversity of the school promotes acceptance, tolerance and celebrates individuality. These themes are embedded in the school's ethos.
- All staff have boarders' safety at the heart of their practice. This is supported by clear policies and procedures which are understood by staff and consistently applied in practice.
- Boarders have very good relationships with staff, based on mutual respect and trust. Boarding facilities are well organised and run. They provide boarders with a comfortable, safe environment in which to thrive, develop and reach their full potential.
- The staff are very committed to the boarders. They strive to provide them with a high standard of individualised care. The school's leaders are very involved in its day to day life. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are committed to driving towards excellence.
- Feedback from boarders and parents is very positive. Boarders feel safe and secure at the school. Parents praised the staff for their commitment to the boarders and the high standard of the communication from the school.
- All of the national minimum standards for boarding schools are met. Some points for further improvement have been made to drive the school forward towards its goal of becoming an outstanding provision.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Wendy Anderson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure where medications brought by boarders from overseas information is obtained as to exactly what these are, what they are for, what they contain and how they are to be administered. (NMS 3)
- ensure where boarders are taking food supplements these are monitored by staff and taken as per instructions.(NMS 3)
- ensure safety checks on fire fighting and prevention equipment is consistently recorded. (NMS 6)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for boarders

Outstanding

Boarders benefit from living in a highly inclusive boarding community. Excellent relationships exist between boarders and staff and boards. This approach provides a warm, nurturing environment in which boarders can learn and develop as individuals. Boarders have a strong affiliation to their school and would recommend it to others.

Boarders make excellent progress in their personal, social and educational development. Boarders benefit from living with others from diverse cultures. In addition, the small school's small size enables boarders to know everyone.

Boarders develop their sense of self, self-worth and self-confidence. They work closely with staff to plan for their futures and the next move in their lives. A number of ex-students maintain contact with the school and have provided support for current boarders.

Boarders are able to develop and increase their independence skills which will benefit them in the next stage of their lives. They are supported to take on roles of responsibility, such as head boy and girl, or to become members of various committees and teams within the school.

Boarders are able to take part in an exceptionally wide range of activities, both on and off the school campus. This includes work in the local community and charity work. This gives boarders insight into being an effective and valued member of a local community. In addition, they are also able to act as role models for other young people.

Boarders are enabled to lead a healthy lifestyle. Each boarder is given a membership of the local gym upon admission. There are various sports teams across the school. Boarders learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. This includes the dangers of substance abuse and advice on where they can access help in the community. This knowledge will equip them for later life and enable them to make informed positive choices.

Boarders are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives. A significant number of boarders move on to first class universities around the world.

Quality of boarding provision and care

Good

Boarders are cared for by a dedicated boarding team. Their identified individual needs are fully met by this team. The foundation of the work undertaken with boarders is the strong relationship boarding staff have with the boarders. These are based on trust, mutual respect and the boarding teams in depth understanding of each boarder they care for. Boarders make good to outstanding progress in all aspect of their lives, academically and personally. Academic and boarding staff have very good working relationships which enable effective communication. This enhances the consistency of the care, support and services provided for the boarders.

Admission to the school is well managed. The admission pack for boarders and their families is comprehensive and provides them with a good overview of life at the school.

The head teacher interviews every prospective boarder as part of their suitability for admission assessment. This enables boarders to begin to develop a positive relationship with the head teacher, who wants to be seen as accessible to them at all times.

During their orientation week, boarders get to know the local community and the amenities on offer inside and outside the school. In addition, the school arranges information sessions on

personal and community safety, involving the local police. Staff provide information on cultural differences and awareness. This provides the boarders with a strong base upon which to start their life at the school.

The school provides the boarders with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These are not only fun but enhance the boarders' personal growth and development. Boarders are encouraged to contribute ideas for activities and events. Boarders said that this consultation works very well. They were able to provide numerous examples of events which had taken place as a result. Activities are linked to the school's Sports Culture and Service programme. This programme supports the school's ethos, 'to provide an environment in which the full potential and individuality of each pupil can be realised'. The school aims to develop the whole person, which enables boarders to be a positive influence in their wider community and share the importance of respecting and celebrating different cultures.

Consultation is a real strength of the school. Boarders have a variety of avenues where they are supported and encouraged to express their views and ideas. For example, boarders participate in food committees and the school council. Both have been able to effect change within the school. The Head teacher operates an 'open door' policy. Both boarders and staff confirmed that the Head is incredibly approachable and will always make time for them and their views or ideas.

The school ensures that boarders' healthcare needs are met. Boarders have access to all local health services. The school has a high number of staff who are trained in first aid. The school maintains specific health information for individual boarders in a variety of documents. The school is in the process of pulling this information together into an individual health care plan. Medication storage is appropriate, but was improved during the inspection by the purchase of a specific medical cabinet. A number of boarders self-administer they own medication, once they have been assessed by staff to ensure that they are safe and competent to do so. The majority of boarders are from overseas and bring medication with them. There is a lack of consistency regarding gathering information about what these medications actually are how they should be administered. This could potentially place boarders' health at risk. This was robustly addressed during the inspection. Some boarders take food supplements. Currently, staff are not monitoring or discussing their use with boarders. This could potentially lead to boarders using these supplements inappropriately.

The standard of the boarding accommodation and maintenance is very high. Bedrooms are either doubles or singles with en-suite bathrooms. There is ample storage and study provision for boarders' needs. During the Christmas holidays there was a flood in the main building and swift action was taken to repair the damage this caused. This did affect the larger maintenance tasks planned for this period, but these have been rescheduled. There is ample communal space and each of the boarding houses has an appropriately equipped kitchen. All boarding accommodation is comfortably furnished and has a warm welcoming atmosphere.

Food at the school is of a very high standard. Menus are varied, nutritious and provide a good amount of choice. Special diets are catered for. Boarders did raise some points about the food and the school have taken these on board. Some of these have recently been raised through the food committee and have already been addressed.

Boarders' safety

Good

Boarders' safety is central to all aspects of the school's work. This begins with robust staff recruitment and vetting, which helps to protect boarders from adults who may wish to cause them harm.

All staff receive frequently-updated training in child protection and safeguarding. This is

supported by a clear safeguarding policy and procedure. Staff demonstrated a good working knowledge of these procedures. Several of the management team, including the designated safeguarding officer, have undergone level 3 safeguarding training. Although the school has not had to make any safeguarding referrals to the local authority, they have made links with them to develop an effective working relationship.

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy to support good safeguarding practice. Boarders said they felt safe at the school and all could list several members of the staff team with whom they would be comfortable talking if they felt unsafe. The staff teach boarders about personal safety, including internet and social media safety. Boarders said that bullying is not an issue within the school. Tolerance, respect and the celebration of individuality and different cultures is part of the school's core values and is taught through the personal, social and health education programme. Debate and discussion are a key part of life at the school, enabling boarders to express their views and develop an understanding of other people's perspectives.

The school has a detailed behaviour policy and strategy which is well known to all staff and boarders. Boarders' behaviour is exemplary. They are a credit to themselves and the school. Boarders are well-mannered, caring individuals who are proud of their school. Age-appropriate, consistently-applied school rules are based on good community living and respect for others.

The school provides the boarders and staff with a secure and safe environment in which to live and work. Risk assessments are detailed and include action to be taken to reduce or eliminate identified risks. These risk assessments cover all the required areas and are frequently reviewed and amended to ensure that they are current.

Fire safety is generally well managed and informed by clear policies and procedures. On occasions, Fire equipment safety checks have not always been recorded consistently. In addition, a fire door was wedged open during the inspection. By the end of the inspection, an appropriate door guard had been purchased to prevent a repetition. Regular fire drills ensure that all boarders and staff are clear on what action needs to be taken if the fire alarm sounds.

Leadership and management of boarding

Good

The leadership and management team is very committed to the boarders in their care. The aims and ethos of the school are well understood and implemented. The leadership team has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the boarding provision. Leaders have a strong drive and vision for the boarding provision to become a beacon of excellence. This is demonstrated with the documentation seen throughout the inspection. This includes a good and honest self-evaluation system which incorporates information from staff boarders and parents.

Senior staff at the school are approachable and extremely experienced in boarding matters. Staff, boarders and parents were particularly complimentary about the headteacher's work. Comments included, 'I've never been to a school where the Head is so involved and interested in boarders, their views and ideas. Lots of people say they have an open door policy, but he really does.' 'The head knows us so well'. 'If we have an idea, he listens and helps us see it through'.

There are sufficient staff to meet boarders' needs. Senior staff support the boarding staff team through formal and informal supervision. Training is given a high priority and staff are encouraged to put forward ideas for future learning, that will not only enhance their practice but also improve the school as a whole.

Communication between members of the boarding team, and between boarding staff and the academic team, is excellent. This leads to a cohesive approach to meeting individual boarders' needs.

The majority of pupils at the school are boarders because they come from overseas. This means that boarding has a very high profile. The staff team recognise and celebrate the diverse cultures within the school and support all boarders to develop and reach their full potential, not only academically, but personally as individuals.

The school has outstanding relationships with boarders' parents, who frequently praise the staff team for the support and guidance they provide for their children. The staff are proactive in keeping parents informed of what is happening at the school, which parents greatly appreciate.

The school is very involved in the local community. Boarders access local facilities and volunteer at local schools, older people's homes, youth clubs and other community-based organisations. Staff see this work as an important part of the boarders' development. It enables boarders to understand, appreciate and contribute to their wider community.

This is the school's first inspection since they were registered with Ofsted.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138405
Social care unique reference number	SC469113
DfE registration number	886/6138

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Boarding School
Number of boarders on roll	69
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	15 to 19
Headteacher	Mr Tim Fish
Date of previous boarding inspection	
Telephone number	01303 253951

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